

REMARKS

The Examiner is thanked for the due consideration given the application.

Claims 1-20 and 42-46 are pending in the application. Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate subject matter cancelled from claim 3 and to improve the language. Claims 4-20 have been amended to improve the language in what is believed to be a non-narrowing fashion. Claims 42-46 are new and find support in the specification at page 12, lines 7-16.

No new matter is believed to be added to the application by this amendment.

Objections To The Claims

The claims have been objected to as containing informalities. The claims have been amended to be free from informalities.

Rejection Under 35 USC §112, Second Paragraph

Claims 1-20 have been rejected under 35 USC §112, Second Paragraph, second paragraph, as being indefinite. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The claims have been amended to address the concerns raised in the Official Action. Claims 1-20 are thus clear, definite and have full antecedent basis.

This rejection is believed to be overcome, and withdrawal thereof is respectfully respected.

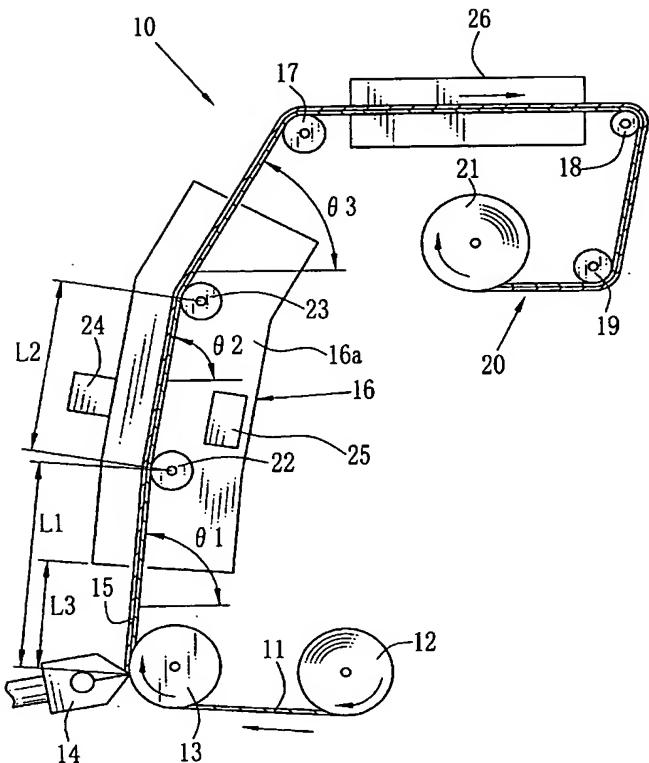
Rejections Based On STROBUSH et al.

Claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 14, 15, 17 and 18 have been rejected under 35 USC §102(b) as being anticipated by STROBUSH et al. (U.S. Patent 5,881,476). Claims 19 and 20 have been rejected under 35 USC §102(b) as being anticipated by, or in the alternative, under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over STROBUSH et al. Claims 3, 6-9, 11 and 16 have been rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over STROBUSH et al., optionally in view of AOKI (U.S. Publication 2002/0031608 A1) for claims 3 and 6-8. Claims 10, 12 and 13 have been rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over STROBUSH et al., optionally in view of AOKI as applied to claims 1-9, 11 and 14-17, and further in view of REZNIK (U.S. Patent 4,694,586).

These rejections are respectfully traversed.

The present invention pertains to a method for drying a coating layer in which a web is transported nearly vertically, i.e., 60°-90°, into a drying apparatus immediately after coating. The present invention is illustrated, by way of example, in Figure 1 of the application, which is reproduced below.

FIG.1



Claim 1 of the present invention recites, in part, "transporting said web upwardly with  $60^{\circ}$ - $90^{\circ}$  inclination to a horizontal direction immediately after the coating," and "drying said coating layer with a drying device having a casing in which said web enters at said  $60^{\circ}$ - $90^{\circ}$  inclination." Newly presented claims 42-45 further define the inclination.

STROBUSH et al. pertains to drying a coating on a substrate employing multiple drying zones. The Official Action refers to Figure 5 and 23 of STROBUSH et al. and asserts that these figures show the coated substrate being transported upward

"almost vertically." See Official Action at page 7, lines 11-12.

Figure 5 of STROBUSH et al. is reproduced below.

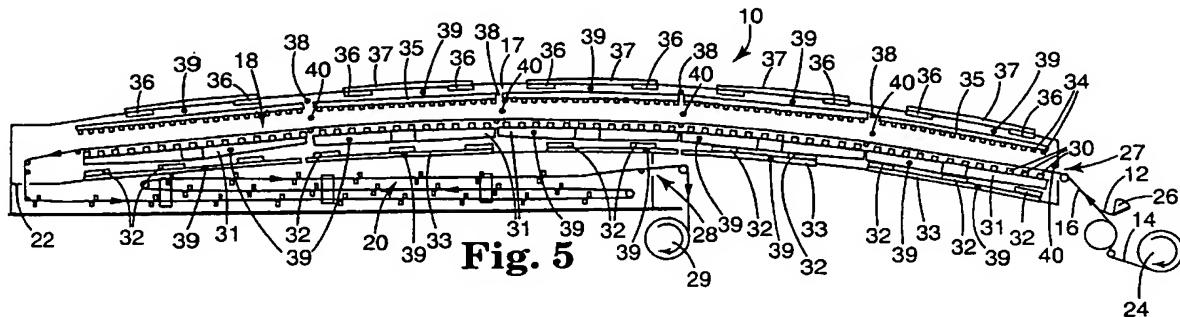
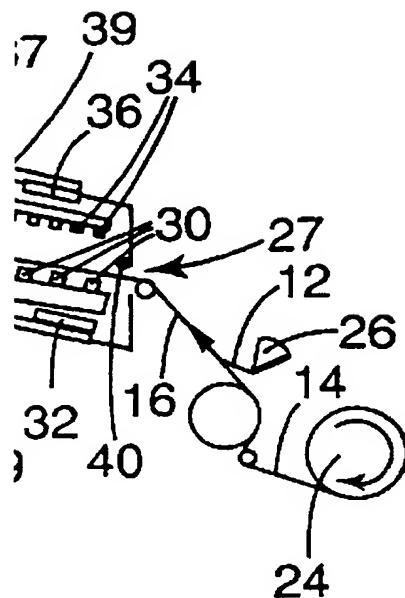
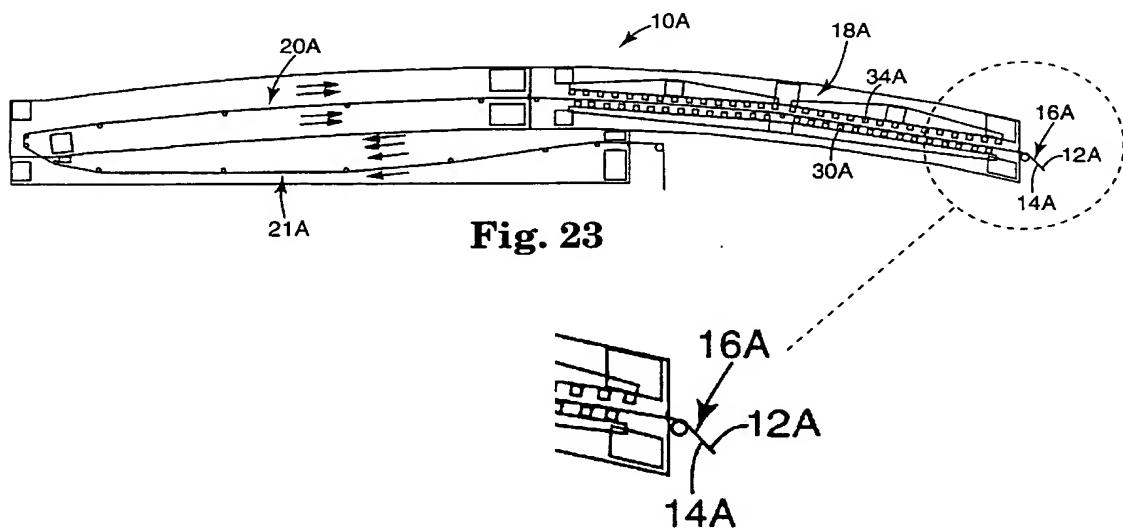


Figure 5 of STROBUSH et al. shows a substrate 14 being coated by a coating apparatus 26. The coated substrate 16 enters the drying apparatus 10 through a coated substrate entrance 27 and is dried at first and second zones 18 and 20. See STROBUSH et al. at column 9, lines 30-35.

The coated substrate of STROBUSH et al. enters the substrate entrance at a nearly horizontal orientation, as is readily observed in the blown up portion of Figure 5, which is reproduced below.



The orientation of the coated substrate and drying apparatus in Figure 23 of STROBUSH et al., reproduced below, is similar to that depicted in Figure 5.



STROBUSH et al. thus clearly fails to disclose or suggest "drying said coating layer with a drying device having a casing in which said web enters at said 60°-90° inclination," such as is set forth in claim 1 of the present invention. The other applied art fails to address this deficiency of STROBUSH et al. Claim 1 of the present invention is thus neither anticipated nor *prima facie* unpatentable over STROBUSH et al. or any combination based on STROBUSH et al. Claims depending upon claim 1 are patentable for at least the above reasons.

Further, even if one assumes *arguendo* that the applied art is sufficient to allege unpatentability, this unpatentability would be rebutted by the unexpected results of the present invention. These unexpected results of the present invention are typified by the comparative data for the 60-90° inclination set forth in Table 1 of the specification, which is reproduced below.

	Coating Method	Condition of Transporting Film			Estimation
		Position of CS	Entrance Angle $\theta 1^\circ$	Exit Angle $\theta 2^\circ$	
Ex.1	Extrusion	Upside	90	84	Good
Ex.2	Extrusion	Upside	80	70	Good
Ex.3	Extrusion	Upside	65	60	Good
Ex.4	Wire Bar	Upside	75	70	Good
Co.1	Extrusion	Upside	0	0	Refused
Co.2	Extrusion	Upside	15	20	Refused
Co.3	Wire Bar	Downside	0	0	Refused
Co.4	Wire Bar	Downside	45	45	Refused
Co.5	Extrusion	Upside	40	30	Refused

The advantages of the present invention are thus clear. These rejections are believed to be overcome, and withdrawal thereof is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

The Examiner is thanked for considering the Information Disclosure Statement filed on March 26, 2004, and for making an initialed PTO-1449 Form of record in the application.

Prior art of record but not utilized is believed to be non-pertinent to the instant claims.

The objections and rejections are believed to be overcome, obviated or rendered moot, in that no issues remain.

The Examiner is accordingly respectfully requested to place the application in condition for allowance and to issue a Notice of Allowability.

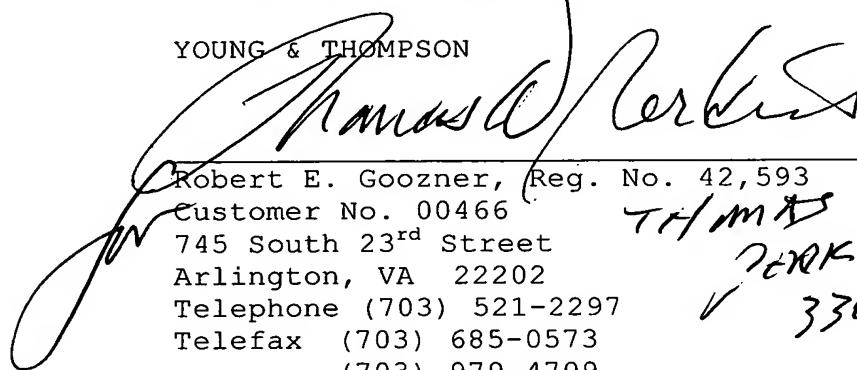
Should there be any matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any

overpayment to Deposit Account No. 25-0120 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17.

Respectfully submitted,

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